



# PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



“The greatest human achievements - from ancient pyramids to modern skyscrapers - have all resulted from an ability to envision the future and muster the resources needed to achieve it.”

*-American Planning Association-*

## A Comprehensive Plan...

is required by state statute as a basis for zoning and must include objectives and policies for future land use development and development of public ways, places, land, structures and utilities. A comprehensive plan is also required by a number of state and federal grants programs in which the City takes part such as Community Development Block Grants, Home Grants and federal highway funding. However a comprehensive plan can be much more to a city. Preparation of a plan offers the opportunity for the public to work with City leaders and staff persons to develop a vision for the development of the city.

In Indianapolis-Marion County, the Comprehensive Plan has historically been more than a series of policy statements. It has been a detailed guide for development, which has contained policies, maps, text and critical areas designating the most appropriate land use recommendations for all parcels of land in Indianapolis and explaining the basis for those recommendations. The Plan was initially adopted in 1965 and has been updated in roughly seven to ten year increments, with the most recent update occurring between 1991 and 1993.

The Comprehensive Plan for the City of Indianapolis - Marion County is a policy guide for the development of the community. The purpose of the Plan is:

- To improve the quality of the physical environment of the community in response to social, economic, and physical realities and forecasts;
- To provide for the well-being of the entire metropolitan community, rather than advance the special interests of individuals or groups within the community;
- To act as a guide in the formation of additional plans;
- To promote community goals, objectives, and policies;
- To coordinate the political and technical aspects of community development in order to eliminate conflict or duplication of public and private projects;
- To insert long-range considerations of goals in decisions about short-range actions; and
- To enhance citizen participation in community development and provide citizens with a sense of security and civic pride.

### Authority to Compile a Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan for the City of Indianapolis - Marion County is compiled under the authority granted to the municipal government under Indiana Code 36-7-4-501 through 512. Indiana Code provides for the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, the adoption of the plan by the Metropolitan Development Commission (MDC), and for citizen participation in

the planning effort. Furthermore, the Code states that the Comprehensive Plan, once adopted by the MDC, shall become law and replace the existing Comprehensive Plan, and act as a guide in ordinance and policy formation, future planning efforts, and certain public works projects.

## **Indianapolis Insight Process**

This plan was constructed from three main sources: background studies and previous plans, public involvement, and existing conditions. An overview of existing conditions can be found in Chapters Two through Four.

## **Background studies and previous plans**

A number of background studies were conducted in preparation for the Indianapolis Insight Plan. This plan builds upon the concepts and findings of the Report of the Growth Advisory Committee, the Township Facilities and Services Needs Assessments and the Indianapolis Development Assets book. To request copies of any of the following documents, please call (317) 327-5151.

## **Report of the Growth Advisory Committee**

The Marion County Growth Advisory Committee was formed in the fall of 1999 to explore and report to the Metropolitan Development Commission on ideas that will encourage better growth patterns and to identify tools to manage growth.

The Growth Advisory Committee was composed of representatives of a varied and balanced group of organizations. The group met four times in late 1999. At the meetings, the committee heard speakers talk on topics germane to the issues of urban growth and held small group discussions.

This report looks at current issues of urban growth. The five chapter titles give a good sense of the breadth of the report. They are:

- The Nationwide Issue of Rapid Urban Growth.
- National Growth Trends Echoed by Indianapolis.
- Forms of Land Use Management in Indianapolis.
- Growth Management Tools in Other Cities and States.
- Growth Management Options for Indianapolis.

Three factors tied up within the issue of urban growth are rate, distribution and quality. Rate refers to how fast development is occurring. Distribution refers to how land uses are mixed or separated within general areas. Quality refers to how well the new development will hold up over time. Committee members were asked the question “Is metropolitan Indianapolis growing too quickly, too slowly, or somewhere in between?” Although there was not complete consensus on the answer, the general response of the committee is that Indianapolis is not growing too quickly. The committee was more concerned about distribution of growth and quality of development. These concerns led to the formation of two objectives.

We should strive to achieve a balance of land uses throughout the various parts of the county and the region. Balanced land use is important not only for tax base equity, but also for livable communities where people can live, shop, recreate and earn a living throughout the different phases of their lives.

New developments should be such that they retain their value over the long haul. Well-planned, well-built and well-maintained communities should retain their value and should not be a drain on society and government resources.

## **Township Facilities and Services Needs Assessments**

An assessment of the need for various facilities and services in each township began in 1998 in response to citizen concerns about the ability of the physical and social infrastructure to keep pace with growth and development. The assessments look at:

- current supply of the township's facilities and services,
- current demand for facilities and services,
- likely future levels of demand based on projected population, and
- a comparison of supply and demand to determine need.

The individual township assessments were developed over an 18-month period in 1998 and 1999.

Although the facilities and services studied in each township assessment vary somewhat, they typically include hospital and medical care, emergency medical services, public safety, parks and recreation facilities, school, libraries, elderly care, youth services, children's day care and cemeteries. The assessments did not study the adequacy of the townships' streets and roads. The county's transportation system is closely monitored and plans are regularly updated by the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

## **Indianapolis Development Assets book**

The Indianapolis Development Assets (IDA) book provides up-to-date comprehensive information on Indianapolis-Marion County, Indiana. The IDA serves as an almanac, providing summary facts and figures on general important aspects of Indianapolis. The data provided in this document is especially useful to developers, researchers, market analysts, government officials, private agencies, and others. The information is presented by section in the form of maps, graphs, tables and text.

This update of Comprehensive Plan builds upon the concepts employed in earlier versions of the Plan. It also incorporates other planning efforts that have been adopted into the Comprehensive Plan as official Comprehensive Plan segments. A list of these plans can be found in Appendix A.



## Public involvement

Public awareness and involvement was maintained in a variety of ways throughout the Indianapolis Insight process. The entire process would not have been possible without the work and dedication of citizen volunteers. Through the Indianapolis Insight process almost 700 citizen volunteers have contributed over 3500 hours to the planning process.

A Steering Committee of 43 persons, representing various groups with a stake in the development of the city, was named. The list of committee members can be found in Appendix G of this document. Members included representatives of neighborhood organizations, environmental groups, builders, business organizations, school districts, mayors of the excluded cities and towns and township governments. The Steering Committee also included the chairpersons of eight issue committees. The Committee provided direction to the planning process and assisted in the coordination of citizen participation.

The first event to create awareness and solicit public involvement was a Kick-Off Conference held September 14, 2000. Over 1000 persons were invited to attend and bring others. Attendance was estimated at 220 persons for the morning-long event. The event included a presentation by Dr. Catherine Ross of the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, a panel discussion by local leaders with various viewpoints on the topic of city development and a presentation of the planning process to be used for the Indianapolis Insight Plan. The conference was covered by the local news media.

Town Hall Meetings were held to gain community input in the planning process. The first series of Town Hall Meetings was held in September and October of 2000. Over 1200 persons were invited, including representatives of every registered neighborhood organization. Meetings were held in four locations around the city on various nights of the week over a three-week period. Attendance ranged from 20 to 40 persons per meeting. Participants were asked about what city development issues were important to them now and in the future. Participants were given the opportunity to preliminarily sign up for the issue committees. Three of the four meetings were covered by the local news media.

Following the Town Hall meetings, Issue Committees were formed to study various topics in more detail. The topics to be covered by each committee were developed from the information gathered at the Town Hall meetings. The eight issue committees were:

- Cultural, Social, and Education
- Economic Development
- Environment, Parks, and Open Space
- Land Use Standards and Procedures
- Neighborhoods and Housing
- Redevelopment
- Regionalism
- Transportation and Infrastructure



The eight Issue Committees met eight to nine times beginning in late January 2001 through July 2001. Each committee was made up of 30 to 40 experts, city staff persons and citizens to discuss issues, and develop goals, recommendations and standards in their particular topical area. The committee meetings were open to anyone who wanted to attend. Attendance at the meetings was good throughout the process with one-half to three-quarters of each committee's membership typically attending each meeting.

The invitation to join an issue committee was made at the Town Hall meetings and through a newsletter. Committee members were polled as to their most convenient meeting times and the meetings were scheduled accordingly. The meeting schedule was run in the Indianapolis Star and local television and radio news programs.

The work of the eight committee meetings was compiled into separate reports that were presented to the Steering Committee. Later the eight committee reports were merged with other information to produce this document, the community values component of the City of Indianapolis - Marion County Comprehensive Plan.

A second round of Town Hall meetings are to be held in locations around Marion County to present the results of the eight issue committees and the draft of the Community Values document. Like the first series of Town Hall meetings, these will be held in various locations around the City and on various nights of the week in order to avoid as many scheduling conflicts as possible.

Information about the process was also disseminated by a series of newsletters and an Indianapolis Insight webpage within the City's website. The webpage detailed the planning process and includes notices of upcoming meetings and minutes of past meetings. The webpage has experienced more than 1200 hits from mid-December, 2000 through the middle of September 2001. The website has received national recognition in the area of E-planning in the July issue of the American Planning Association's magazine Planning.



